

Every spring the President submits his budget proposal for the following fiscal year (FY07) to Congress. This document effectively serves as a guide for where the President's priorities lay. Unfortunately, the FY 2007 budget proposal does not meet the needs and values of Americans.

Environmental programs present a vivid illustration of the misdirected funding priorities within the FY 2007 budget. For the sixth straight year, the budget proposes to significantly cut funding for programs that protect public health and the environment, cutting FY 2007 funding by \$2.4 billion, an 8 percent reduction below FY 2006 levels. At the same time, the budget calls for selling 800,000 acres of public lands to mining, timber and oil companies. Some examples of especially egregious decisions in the budget include:

- Cutting the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget by \$304 million. The EPA is the United States' primary enforcer of environmental laws, including the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. Cutting funding will undermine the EPA's ability to protect public health.

- The budget proposes to slash funding for the states' Clean Water Revolving Loan Funds, which help improve wastewater treatment facilities, by \$199 million, a 22% cut. If the President's budget is enacted, Clean Water funding would have been slashed from \$1.3 billion in FY 2004 to \$688 million in FY 2007, a cut of 49% in three short years.

- Despite the many unmet needs of our national parks, the budget proposes to cut funding by \$100 million or 4%, including a cut of \$72 million in the construction and major maintenance fund. Our park system is a natural treasure that should be preserved through full funding.

- In the last few years, the Republican Leadership has made every attempt to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), including attaching it to unrelated bills like the Defense Appropriations Act. Each time we managed to defeat these efforts. Despite overwhelming public support to ban drilling in ANWR, the President's FY 2007 budget once again assumes revenue from federal oil leases.

- The FY 2007 budget proposal includes two new proposals to sell off public lands. Under the budget, 300,000 acres of National Forest lands and 500,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands over the next five years would be put on the auction block. This is no way to serve as a steward of the public trust.

The President's FY 2007 budget is a case study on misplaced priorities, putting oil, timber and mining interests first. I believe this choice runs counter to the public's interest. As a member on the Interior Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I will use my position to promote adequate funding for our public lands, environmental protection programs and the public health. Our treatment of the environment will be felt by future generations and thus it is important that our policies respect the interests of all Americans.

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